DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 170 486 CE 020 044

AUTHOR Staines, Graham L.; And Others
TITLE Wives' Employment Status and Marital Adjustment: Yet Another Look.
PUB DATE [77]
NOTE 54p.; Some parts of this document may not reproduce well because of light or broken type

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC03 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Comparative Analysis; *Employee Attitudes; Family Influence; Females; Housewives; *Interpersonal Relationship; Job Satisfaction; Males; Marital Instability; Marital Status; *Marriage; Mother Attitudes; Mothers; *National Surveys; *Personal Adjustment; Social Science Research; Statistical Analysis; *Working Women

ABSTRACT

The effects of wives' employment status on wives' and husbands' evaluations of their own marital adjustment were examined in two recent national surveys. Working wives whose husbands also work reported having wished they had married someone else and having thought of divorce significantly more often than housewives but did not score significantly lower on ratings of marital satisfaction or marital happiness or on four other specific components of marital adjustment. Wives' employment status did not significantly affect husbands' reports of marital adjustment. The negative effects of wives' employment on wives' reports of marital adjustment were then found to be restricted specifically to mothers of preschool children and to wives with less than a high school diploma. No empirical support emerged for two major hypotheses to account for the negative effects of wives' employment on wives' marital adjustment in these two subgroups, one hypothesis concerning wives' role load and the second concerning wives' and husbands' attitudes toward wives' employment. There was some evidence, however, that these factors are moderators of the negative effects of wives' employment on wives' marital adjustment, in particular, that high role load moderates the negative effects of employment among mothers of preschool children. (References, footnotes, and statistical tables are appended.) (Author)

**********
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
**********

ED170486

# Wives' Employment Status and Marital Adjustment: Yet Another Look

Graham L. Staines

The University of Michigan

Institute for Social Research

Joseph H. Pleck

University of Massachusetts--Amherst

Linda J. Shepard and Pamela O'Connor

The University of Michigan

Institute for Social Research

SCOPE OF INTEREST NOTICE
The ERIC Facility has assigned this document for processing to: CE CG
In our judgement, this document is also of interest to the clearinghouses noted to the right. Indexing should reflect their special points of view.

U S DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
Graham L. Staines
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

CE 030 044

CN001572

Running head: Wives' Employment Status and Marital Adjustment

ABSTRACT

The effects of wives' employment status on wives' and husbands' evaluations of their own marital adjustment are examined in two recent national surveys. Working wives whose husbands also work report having wished they had married someone else and having thought of divorce significantly more often than housewives, but do not score significantly lower on ratings of marital satisfaction or marital happiness, or on four other specific components of marital adjustment. Wives' employment status does not significantly affect husbands' reports of marital adjustment. The negative effects of wives' employment on wives' reports of marital adjustment are then found to be restricted specifically to mothers of preschool children, and to wives with less than a high school diploma. No empirical support emerges for two major hypotheses to account for the negative effects of wives' employment on wives' marital adjustment in these two subgroups, one hypothesis concerning wives' role load and the second concerning wives' and husbands' attitudes toward wives' employment. There is some evidence, however, that these factors are moderators of the negative effects of wives' employment on wives' marital adjustment, in particular, that high role load moderates the negative effects of employment among mothers of preschool children.

# Wives' Employment Status and Marital Adjustment: Yet Another Look

Recent interest in families in which husband and wife both work for pay (i.e., dual worker families) has revived the debate over whether a wife's work status affects her own or her husband's marital adjustment. To resolve this debate, studies must compare either working wives whose husbands also work (dual wives) with housewives whose husbands work (housewives), or working husbands of working wives (dual husbands) with working husbands of housewives (sole breadwinning husbands). Relevant studies must also contain psychological measures of marital adjustment and must analyze separately the marital adjustment reported by each spouse.

Twelve previous studies have included zero-order comparisons on marital adjustment between the two groups of wives or the two groups of husbands.[1] In some of the 12, a limited percentage of working wives whose husbands were not currently working were included along with the dual wives. All of the studies employed national or community wide samples, drawn either through probability sampling techniques or through cruder procedures that appear to have produced nearly representative samples. Whereas most of the 12 studies involved American samples, several were conducted in European settings. Regrettably, these studies generally used quite different measures of marital adjustment. Such methodological variations notwithstanding, their findings are directionally

consistent. Seven studies registered somewhat higher marital adjustment among housewives than dual wives (Buric & Zecevic, 1967; Campbell, Converse & Rodgers, 1976; Gover, 1963; Michel, 1967; Radloff, 1975; Safilios-Rothschild, 1967; Scanzoni, 1970), although only one of them (Gover, 1963) established the difference as significant. Three studies (Blood and Wolfe, 1960; Haavio-Mannila, 1971; Orden and Bradburn, 1969) obtained trivial differences, another (Safilios-Rothschild, 1970) recorded only that there was no significant difference, and no study reported a significant reversal of the dominant pattern. Two studies of the marital adjustment of husbands (Axelson, 1963; Scanzoni, 1970) assigned an edge to sole breadwinners over dual husbands, significantly so in the earlier study, but a third study (Campbell et al., 1976) found no difference.

While zero-order comparisons among the marital groups hold considerable interest, they may obscure more potent differences within specific subsamples. Eleven studies have examined the impact of wives' employment status on marital adjustment within one or more levels of education. Ten of the 11 included comparisons among highly educated wives (i.e., largely college educated). They tend to indicate that the zero-order pattern noted above (better marital adjustment among housewives than dual wives) existed in the '20s among educated women (Davis, 1929), yet had diminished by the '40s (Locke & Mackeprang, 1949 [study two]). By around 1970, the studies of educated women suggested no clear advantage to housewives in that roughly as many studies found higher adjustment among dual wives (Burke & Weir, 1976; Campbell et al., 1976; Scanzoni, 1970) as found an advantage for housewives (Fogarty, Rapoport & Rapoport, 1971; Tavris, 1971) or no advantage for either group

(Feldman, Note 1; Tavris & Jayaratne, 1976; Fidell, Notes 2 and 3). Even the three studies reporting significant differences for educated wives (Burke & Weir, 1976; Campbell et al., 1976; Fogarty et al., 1971) were inconsistent as to direction. Two studies reported on less educated wives, mainly wives without high school diplomas (Hauenstein, Note 4; Scanzoni, 1970). Both studies were recent and both pointed to an advantage in adjustment among housewives. Taken together, the recent studies concerning levels of education suggest that the decrement in marital adjustment of dual wives relative to housewives is greater among less educated than among better educated wives. As for husbands, the data on marital adjustment and education have conformed to no clear trend (Burke & Weir, 1976; Locke & Mackeprang, 1949 [study two]; Scanzoni, 1970).

Aside from education, unfortunately, the literature on wives' employment status and marital adjustment includes no systematic, cross-sectional evidence on other important control variables such as family life cycle stage.

The present study makes within-sex comparisons of the marital adjustment of the four major married groups, using data from two recent, nationally representative surveys. The analysis first compares the marital adjustment of the two groups of wives and the two groups of husbands in each total sample (zero-order comparisons) and within each level of two control variables, family life cycle and education (first-order comparisons). The latter first-order analyses are designed to locate demographic subgroups in which zero-order differences among the married groups are heightened or reduced. Two general interpretations

of significant differences in marital adjustment at the first-order level are investigated: (a) that wives' employment affects wives' marital adjustment by creating role overload among employed wives through the combined demands of their paid work and family roles, and (b) that wives' employment is associated with differences in marital adjustment because of wives' and husbands' attitudes concerning wives' current work and family roles. The general analytic strategy used here is Lazarsfeld's "elaboration model" (Babbie, 1973).

## METHOD

### Sample

The first dataset comes from the 1971 Quality of Life Survey conducted by the Survey Research Center, Ann Arbor, Michigan (Campbell et al., 1976). The survey involved interviews with a national probability sample of 2,164 persons, 18 years of age or older, living in households in the coterminous United States. For this first dataset, the four married groups were defined analytically as follows:

1. Dual wives, wives currently married and employed whose husbands are currently employed (N=259).

2. Housewives, wives currently married but not employed who classify themselves as housewives and whose husbands are currently employed (N=368).

3. Dual husbands, husbands currently married and employed 20 or more hours per week whose wives are currently employed (N=203).

4. Sole breadwinning husbands, husbands currently married and employed 20 or more hours per week whose wives are not currently employed (N=303).

The second dataset was likewise collected by the Survey Research Center, and is a product of the 1973 Fall Omnibus Survey. This later survey used the same sampling and interviewing techniques and generated a national probability sample of 1,440 respondents. It distinguished only three married groups as follows:

1. Dual wives, wives currently married and employed whose husbands are heads of household and are currently employed (N=195).

2. Housewives, wives currently married but not employed whose husbands are heads of household and currently employed (N=234).

3. Sole breadwinning husbands and dual husbands (combined), husbands currently married and employed 20 or more hours per week who are also heads of household (N=354).

## Measures

### Dependent Variables

The 1971 Quality of Life Survey contained seven of the eight dependent measures analyzed in this paper. As regards global measures of marital adjustment, respondents were asked how satisfied they were with their marriages (marital satisfaction), whether they had ever wished they had married someone else (wish married another), and whether the thought of getting a divorce had ever crossed their minds (think of divorce). As to specific components of marital adjustment, respondents indicated how frequently they disagreed with their spouses about money

(financial disagreements), whether they thought their spouses understood them well (understood by spouse), whether they thought they understood their spouses well (understand spouse), and how much companionship they had with their spouses (companionship). Full details on these dependent variables in the Quality of Life Survey, and on the control variables from the same survey to be described shortly, appear in Campbell et al. (1976).

The 1973 Omnibus Survey included only one global measure of marital adjustment, marital happiness. Respondents were asked: "Taking everything together, how happy would you say your marriage is?" (Not too happy, happy, very happy, extremely happy)

First-order Control Variables

Two variables were employed in both datasets as first-order controls. The first, family life cycle, contained four categories: under 30 and no children; parent of a preschool child (aged 6 or under); parent of a school age (aged 7-18) but not a preschool child; and 30 and over with no children living at home. The second, level of education, likewise had four categories: less than a high school diploma, high school diploma, some college education but no degree, and college degree or above.

Second-order Control Variables

Wives' role load. The 1971 Quality of Life Survey provided one item interpretable as a measure of role load among wives. It asked

wives how often they felt rushed even to do the things they had to do (feel rushed).

For mothers only, the 1973 Omnibus Survey included two items generating the following measure of the role load of wives: want more help from husbands, scored as high load when wives wished their husbands would do either more child care ("give you more help taking care of your children") or more housework ("give you more help with the daily household chores"). Other analyses of these two items are available in Robinson, Yerby, Feiweger & Somerick (in press).

Attitudes to wives' present roles. Another set of second-order control variables pertain to attitudes toward wives' present roles. The Quality of Life Survey incorporated two questions that jointly measured wives' role commitment. Interviewers asked dual wives whether or not they would continue to work if they had enough money to live comfortably for the rest of their lives. They inquired of housewives whether they would take paid employment if they could have someone take care of things at home. Dual wives who chose to continue working and housewives who elected to stay home were both scored high on role commitment. This survey also included a pair of parallel but not entirely comparable items tapping wives' role satisfaction. Dual wives' role satisfaction was inferred from their reported level of satisfaction with their jobs. For housewives, role satisfaction was assessed by an item on satisfaction with their homemaking and housework, using an identical response scale.

The Omnibus Survey contained a measure of husbands' attitudes to their wives' present roles. All wives were asked: "How does your husband feel about your working at a job at least half-time? Is he very

much in favor of it, somewhat in favor of it, neither in favor of nor against it, somewhat against it, or very much against it?" Dual wives working at least half-time were scored as having a husband who approved of their current role for the first two response categories, a husband who was neutral for the third category, and a husband who disapproved for the fourth and fifth categories. Conversely, housewives were considered to have a husband who approved of their current role for the last two categories, a husband who was neutral for the third category, and a husband who disapproved for the first two categories.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Zero-order Differences in Marital Adjustment

Table 1 compares the two groups of wives and the two groups of husbands on various measures of marital adjustment.[2] It shows that dual wives do not differ significantly from housewives on the two global measures of adjustment that evaluate marriage as a whole (marital satisfaction and marital happiness). Dual wives do, however, exhibit significantly poorer adjustment than housewives on both the global measures that concern marital choices (wish married another and think of divorce). Yet no significant differences emerge between dual wives and housewives on any of the four specific measures of marital adjustment concerning disagreements about money, understanding one's spouse, being understood by one's spouse, and companionship with one's spouse.[3]

As for husbands, Table 1 reveals that the employment of their wives is not significantly related to their level of marital adjustment

on any of the eight dependent measures available in these two surveys.

---

Insert Table 1 about here

---

First-order Differences in Marital Adjustment

Tables 2 and 3 compare dual wives and housewives on the four global measures of marital adjustment within levels of two first-order control variables: family life cycle and education. The tables omit comparisons among husbands on all measures of adjustment, and comparisons among wives on the specific measures, since these comparisons generated only a few, scattered significant differences.

As regards the two global measures involving marital evaluations, neither of which produces a significant difference between dual wives and housewives at the zero-order level, dual wives register significantly lower marital happiness than housewives among mothers of preschool children but not among wives in any other stage of the family life cycle (Table 2). Marital satisfaction, in comparison, elicits no significant differences between the two groups of wives for any stage of the life cycle. The pattern changes somewhat for the two global measures concerning marital choices, both of which display significant differences among wives in the total sample. For wish married another and think of divorce, dual wives report significantly poorer marital adjustment than housewives in the family life cycle stages with preschool and with school age children, but not in the other two categories.

---

Insert Table 2 about here

---

The results on marital adjustment are presented by level of education in Table 3. On the two global evaluative measures, dual wives score significantly lower on marital satisfaction than housewives among wives with less than a high school diploma but not among wives within any other educational category. Yet no differences emerge in marital happiness between the two groups of wives in any of the four educational categories. The two global measures concerning marital choice (wish married another and think of divorce) demonstrate significantly lower scores for dual wives than housewives, again within the lowest educational category and no other.[4,5]

---

Insert Table 3 about here

---

Review and Interpretation of Zero-order and First-order Differences

The data in Tables 1-3 on the effects of wives' employment on marital adjustment uncover a limited set of significant differences for wives but none for husbands. Dual wives score lower than housewives on marital adjustment for the following samples and measures: total sample (wish married another and think of divorce); mothers of preschool children (marital happiness, wish married another, and think of divorce); mothers of school age children (wish married another and think of divorce);

and wives with less education than a high school diploma (marital satisfaction, wish married another, and think of divorce).

The observed zero-order and first-order differences between dual wives and housewives provide enough evidence to eliminate a number of possible explanations of the lower marital adjustment reported by dual wives. One hypothesis, for example, is that no real difference in marital adjustment exists between dual wives and housewives, but that dual wives are simply more willing to report marital difficulties, perhaps because they are not so totally invested in the marital role that admission of marital problems would be devastating. This hypothesis fails, however, because it implies the existence of consistent mean differences at least across measures of adjustment and possibly across subsamples as well, whereas the observed pattern of results is quite differentiated and specific as to measures and subgroups.

According to another hypothesis, dual wives exhibit lower marital adjustment because their employment and its resulting income disrupts traditional patterns of male dominated authority and decision-making in the family, particularly on financial matters. The hypothesis predicts lower adjustment among dual wives than housewives on the specific item concerning financial disagreements. No such difference appears whatsoever at the zero- or first-order levels. Further, this hypothesis logically implies that dual husbands should score lower than sole breadwinners on marital adjustment generally, and particularly on the item about financial disagreements. As these expected differences are likewise not evident at the zero- or first-order levels, the hypothesis may be rejected.

Differences between dual wives and housewives on demographic variables that are potentially associated with marital adjustment may explain the lower adjustment of dual wives. In the analyses described above, controls on two such variables, family life cycle and education, do not eliminate the significant differences in adjustment found at the zero-order level. Instead, the controls locate the differences in predominantly one stage of the family life cycle (preschool children) and one level of education (less than a high school diploma). Thus, although family life cycle and education are related to the mean differences in marital adjustment, the relationships do not take the simplistic forms suggested by the hypothesis concerning pre-existing differences.

## Second-order Differences among Mothers of Preschool Children

This section and the one following further investigate possible reasons for the decrement in the marital adjustment of dual wives relative to housewives in two demographic subgroups: mothers of preschool children and wives with less than a high school diploma.

Second-order differences permit tests of two general interpretations of the differences on adjustment between dual wives and housewives. First, dual wives may show lower adjustment because they experience greater role load than housewives. The combined work and family responsibilities of dual wives, that is, exceed the family responsibilities of housewives, and such excessive role load (or overload) impairs marital adjustment. The impact of role load on differences in marital adjustment may apply to mothers of preschool children in particular because their

role load from parental responsibilities is already considerable, making them and their marriages especially vulnerable to any addition.

To test this interpretation, measures of role load were introduced as controls, and dual wives and housewives with preschool children were compared on marital adjustment within levels of role load. If role load accounts for the mean differences in marital adjustment between dual wives and housewives, these differences should disappear at all levels of the control variables.

Table 4 presents the comparisons relevant to the hypothesis concerning role load, using two different, indirect measures of wives' role load. For the Omnibus Survey, high wives' role load may be inferred when wives indicate they want their husbands to do more child care or housework. In the Quality of Life Survey, wives' reports of feeling "rushed" indicate their level of role load.

---

Insert Table 4 about here

---

As Table 4 demonstrates consistently, controlling for role load does not eliminate the differences in marital adjustment between dual wives and housewives who have preschool children. When role load is low, the differences between the adjustment of dual wives and housewives diminish, yet among wives classified as high on role load, dual wives continue to register significantly lower marital adjustment than housewives. Thus, controlling for level of wife's role load, at least as inferred from the two control measures available here, eliminates some

of the significant differences among wives with low but not with high role load.

While failing to support the notion that differences in wives' role load account for dual wives' decrement in marital adjustment among mothers of preschool children, the results in Table 4 do demonstrate that role load moderates the relationship between wives' employment status and marital adjustment in this family life cycle stage. High role load among wives exacerbates the apparent negative effect of their employment on marital adjustment, whereas low role load minimizes it. Further, in each of the comparisons shown in Table 4, dual wives score significantly lower on marital adjustment in the high than in the low load category. Hence, although level of role load does not explain the differential adjustment of dual wives and housewives who have preschool children, high role load does reduce the adjustment of dual wives.

Aside from issues of role load, the differential marital adjustment of dual wives and housewives among mothers of preschool children may also be investigated in terms of each wife's attitude toward her present role (employment for dual wives, homemaking and housework for housewives) and each husband's attitude toward his wife's present role. It may be plausibly argued that among mothers of preschool children, dual wives are particularly likely to hold ambivalent or negative attitudes toward being employed. Further, husbands of dual wives may be especially likely to disapprove of their wives' employment when preschool children are present in their families. Thus, in theory, controlling for wives' and husbands' attitudes toward wives' present roles might eliminate the

differences in adjustment between dual wives and housewives among mothers of preschool children.

Relevant to this hypothesis about attitudes toward wives' roles, Table 5 compares dual wives and housewives, controlling in turn for wives' role commitment, wives' role satisfaction, and husbands' attitudes (as reported by wives) toward their wives' present roles. As noted in the Method section, parallel measures for dual wives and housewives of commitment to present role and satisfaction with present role are available in the Quality of Life Survey; and an item in the Omnibus Survey asking wives to report their husbands' attitudes toward their holding a paid job may be interpreted, by appropriate scoring, as indicating the favorability of husbands' attitudes toward their wives' current roles, whether their wives be employed or homemakers.

---

Insert Table 5 about here

---

Contrary to expectation, among mothers of preschool children, controlling for these measures of wives' and husbands' attitudes toward wives' current roles does not eliminate the differences in marital adjustment attributable to wives' employment status. In all cases, the differences between the adjustment of dual wives and housewives remain significant among wives reporting favorable attitudes toward their role, either on their own or their husbands' part. Thus, among mothers of preschool children, possible differences in wives' or husbands' attitudes toward wives' present roles do not account for the significant decrement

in marital adjustment of dual wives relative to housewives. But, as in the preceding analyses concerning wives' role load, attitudes to wives' present roles moderate the effects of wives' employment on marital adjustment.

In addition, Table 5 permits a partial test of a variant hypothesis concerning the relationship between wives' role commitment and marital adjustment. Though not central to the line of analysis pursued here, this hypothesis merits brief consideration. Dual wives may score low on marital adjustment because wives who are disenchanted with their marriages enter the labor force and become highly committed to the work role. This hypothesis implies a negative association among dual wives between commitment to present role (i.e., employment) and marital adjustment for the preschool category. Yet Table 5 demonstrates virtually no association between work commitment and marital adjustment among employed mothers of preschool children.

Second-order Differences among Wives with Less than a High School Diploma

The two general explanations just considered for the decrement in the marital adjustment of dual wives relative to housewives among mothers of preschool children may now be applied to dual wives' decrement in marital adjustment among women with less than a high school diploma.

There are several ways in which wives' and husbands' attitudes to wives' present roles might account for dual wives' decrement in marital adjustment among less educated wives. First, less educated dual wives may take paid employment primarily because of their families' economic needs rather than their own desires to be employed, in effect being forced into

the labor market for economic reasons. Wives' employment under such adverse circumstances may be particularly likely to lead to difficulties in marital adjustment. If this interpretation is correct, differences between dual wives and housewives should disappear when commitment to present role, whether dual wife or housewife, is controlled. Hence, the critical control concerns whether wives would choose to continue in their present roles even if they did not have to (for dual wives, if they had enough money to live comfortably; for housewives, if they had someone to take care of things at home).

A related interpretation involves the job experiences of dual wives with less than a high school diploma. Such wives typically face a job market which offers few attractive occupational possibilities, and frequently work at relatively unsatisfying jobs. Thus, wives' employment may lead to a decrement in marital adjustment specifically among wives with less than a high school diploma because their jobs tend to be particularly unsatisfying. If this interpretation holds true, differences in marital adjustment among least educated wives should be reduced or eliminated when a control is imposed on wives' satisfaction with their present roles, that is, job satisfaction for dual wives, and satisfaction with homemaking and housework for housewives.

---

Insert Table 6 about here

---

Table 6 compares the marital adjustment of dual wives and housewives with less than a high school diploma, controlling first for role commitment and then for role satisfaction. For all three measures of

marital adjustment, among wives high in role commitment, dual wives' decrement in marital adjustment remains significant. For wives low in role commitment, the differences between dual wives' and housewives' adjustment, although still large, are not statistically significant. The control on role satisfaction slightly increases dual wives' decrement in marital adjustment within the low satisfaction category, such that two of the differences in adjustment achieve significance among wives with low education. The same control slightly lowers the decrement in the high satisfaction category and none of these differences attains significance.

A further argument about the differential adjustment of dual wives and housewives refers to the attitudes of husbands towards their wives' present roles. Less educated wives tend to marry less educated husbands who may hold traditional, hence disapproving, attitudes towards the employment of their wives. The absence of a difference in the marital happiness of less educated dual wives and housewives prevents a full test of the hypothesis about husbands' attitudes because there is no significant mean difference for the control variable to reduce. Yet it remains possible to test the hypothesis partially by determining whether the distributions on the control variable are compatible with its predictions. According to data not shown in Table 6, eight out of 48 (or 17 percent) of the dual wives who work at least half time report that their husbands disapprove of their working, whereas 14 housewives out of 77 (or 18

percent) suggest indirectly that their husbands disapprove of their staying home. The near identity of these distributions appears to eliminate the hypothesis that the difference in the marital adjustment of less educated dual wives and housewives stems from husbands' attitudes to their wives' present roles.[6]

An overview of the two analyses presented in Table 6 indicates that differences in neither wives' role commitment nor wives' role satisfaction account for the differences in marital adjustment between less educated dual wives and housewives, in that significant differences between dual wives and housewives persist even after these variables have been controlled. In both control analyses, significant differences generally remain within one level of the control but not the other. This pattern may suggest that the control variable acts as a moderator of the effects of wives' employment on marital adjustment rather than simply as a confounding third variable which must be controlled for. It should be noted, though, that the differences in the dual wives' decrement in marital adjustment between the high and low categories of each control variable are not great. It should likewise be observed that the apparent moderating effects of wives' role commitment and role satisfaction are not consistent with each other. That is, dual wives' decrement in marital adjustment relative to housewives' appears exacerbated by high role commitment but, to a greater extent, by low role satisfaction.

Table 6 also allows a partial test of the variant hypothesis concerning the relationship between wives' role commitment and marital adjustment. The hypothesis was cited earlier in connection with mothers of preschool children but it may also be tested for wives with less than a high

school diploma. As noted earlier, the hypothesis implies that among dual wives high work commitment is associated with low marital adjustment. Like Table 5, Table 6 indicates virtually no differences in marital adjustment between dual wives high and low on work role commitment.

The significant differences between dual wives' and housewives' marital adjustment among wives with less than a high school education may also be considered in light of wives' role load. An argument can be made that role load explains the difference in adjustment between dual wives and housewives in the low education category. Less educated dual wives may hold traditional views about the division of domestic labor and may not feel entitled to ask or to expect their husbands to help them with domestic tasks. Few of them, presumably, can afford paid domestic help. Thus, controlling for wives' role load may diminish the differences in marital adjustment between dual wives and housewives.

---

Insert Table 7 about here

---

The data in Table 7 do not support this prediction. A significant difference in marital adjustment remains among wives low in role load. Thus, once again, a control variable acts as a moderator of the effect of wives' employment on marital adjustment, rather than as a confounding factor which, when controlled for, eliminates the negative effects of wives' employment.

Though not presented in Table 7, the Omnibus data permit one further but only partial test of the role load hypothesis as applied to wives with limited education. The role load measure concerning wives'

desire for more help from their husbands permits a check on the predicted distributions of cases. Seventeen dual wives out of 33 (or 52 percent) comment that they would like more help from their husbands in either childcare or housework (or both), whereas 18 of 46 housewives (or 39 percent) express a desire for more husband help. These proportions are clearly compatible with the interpretation that dual wives in the low education group are overloaded more than housewives but a complete test using desire for more husband help as a control variable is ruled out by the absence of a significant difference on marital happiness between dual wives and housewives in the low education category.[7]

## SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

To summarize the preceding results, dual wives display significantly lower marital adjustment than housewives on two of four global measures: wishing one had married someone else, and having thought about getting a divorce. When controls for family life cycle stage and level of education are introduced, the decrement in the marital adjustment of dual wives relative to housewives is shown to be restricted as regards life cycle primarily to mothers of preschool children, and as regards education to wives with less than a high school diploma. For each of these demographic subgroups, significant differences also emerge on an additional global measure of marital adjustment: marital happiness for mothers of preschool children, and marital satisfaction for wives with less than a high school diploma. In addition, only a few, scattered significant differences were found between dual wives and housewives on four more specific measures of marital adjustment, and between sole breadwinning and dual husbands on any of the dependent measures.

The results in this paper square with most of the comparable findings in previous literature. At the zero-order level, the pattern of results obtained resembles the pattern reported earlier for 12 studies which included comparisons between dual wives and housewives. In this study, as in the previous literature, dual wives score significantly lower in marital adjustment than housewives in only a few comparisons, nonsignificantly lower than housewives in others, and differ hardly at all from housewives in still others. There is also precedent in previous literature for the present pattern of zero-order results concerning overall evaluations of marriage (marital satisfaction and marital happiness) as compared to other global measures of marital adjustment. In Nye's (1959) study of mothers from white, nonfarm families in three Washington towns, employed wives reported thoughts of divorce significantly more often than housewives, but did not report significantly lower marital satisfaction or happiness. The present data also accord with previous literature concerning which levels of education sharpen or weaken the differences between the adjustment of dual wives and housewives. The tendency in the recent literature toward a greater decrement of dual wives' adjustment relative to housewives among less rather than more educated women is replicated quite clearly in the present analyses.

Interpretation of the present findings requires a careful sifting of methodological issues. In particular, a close examination is needed of the dependent measures of marital adjustment and the secondary controls used to test alternative explanations of significant group differences on adjustment. As regards the dependent measures, Nye's (1959) findings, taken in conjunction with those obtained here, suggest the

importance of distinguishing positive from negative measures of marital adjustment. Positive measures tap positive affect (as in marital happiness) or positive assessments (as in marital satisfaction). Negative measures tap marital conflict and thoughts of separation, alternative spouses, and divorce. The data in Nye's study and the zero-order comparisons in the present one indicate that employment can increase wives' negative sentiments and discontent about their marriages without reducing positive satisfaction and happiness. Only in the two sample subgroups where wives' employment has the strongest effects on marriage does it significantly reduce wives' marital satisfaction or happiness as well.

Also deserving methodological comment in the present study are the differences between the findings obtained for global versus specific measures of adjustment. Global measures prove sensitive to the effects of wives' employment in the overall samples and in certain demographic subgroups; the specific measures used here do not. It may be that specific measures are inherently less sensitive to the effects of wives' employment than global ones. Alternatively, the specific measures available here may simply not have included the most relevant ones.

As to the control variables employed in the second-order comparisons, the measures tapping wives' role load appear inferior to those tapping wives' and husbands' attitudes to wives' present roles. Both measures of wives' role load (wives' wishes for more domestic help from their husbands, and frequency of feeling rushed) are indirect, in that they assess wives' role load by recording its presumed subjective consequences for wives. Nonetheless, the indirectness of the measures of load can scarcely be blamed for the lack of support for the role load

hypothesis as applied to mothers of preschool children. To the extent that the measures of load are indirect, hence poor estimates of real load, they would nullify differences between high and low load categories. Yet, such differences appear consistently within and across both datasets.

The first of the two measures of role load, wives' wishes for more domestic help from their husbands, has a further defect. Many wives who experience high load may not express a wish for their husbands to help more, because of traditional beliefs that only women should perform child care and housework. Thus, although all wives in the high load category on this measure experience high load, some of those in the low load category may actually encounter high role load but fail to report a desire for more husband help. But this possible defect in the measure cannot account for the present finding that dual wives register significantly lower marital adjustment than housewives in the high load condition. If the hypothesis concerning role load is accurate, differences in marital adjustment between the two groups of wives should disappear when role load is controlled, i.e., within levels of role load. Since the measure of role load is unproblematic for the high load category, it should yield no significant mean differences on marital adjustment. Significant differences nonetheless appear.

As regards the hypotheses receiving major attention here, excessive role load does not account for the lower adjustment of dual wives among mothers of preschool children. Controls on three measures of role load do not eliminate the significant effects of wives' employment status. Thus, the notion of role load as an intervening mechanism linking wives' employment status and marital adjustment proves unsound. Instead, role load moderates the relationship between employment status and adjustment

in an entirely plausible fashion. Except for one comparison, among the relevant measures of load in both datasets, the negative impact of employment on dual wives' adjustment relative to housewives is significant among and only among those with high load. That is, only among wives who feel overburdened by their responsibilities do those who work report lower adjustment in their marriages.

Still concerned with the decrement in dual wives' adjustment among mothers of preschool children, wives' and husbands' attitudes toward wives' present roles display only limited explanatory power. Controls on attitudes to wives' present roles again do not eliminate the differences between the two groups of wives. These attitudes instead have a moderating effect, but one difficult to interpret: With only one exception among the relevant comparisons, dual wives' decrement in marital adjustment is significant among and only among wives reporting positive scores on the various measures of attitudes toward their present roles. In the control on husbands' attitudes, however, the small number of cases of dual wives reporting neutral or disapproving attitudes in their husbands substantially reduces the utility of this particular control.

Differences in wives' and husbands' attitudes to wives' present roles promise a plausible explanation for the decrement in the marital adjustment of dual wives among the group without a high school diploma. Yet, controlling for wives' attitudes to their present roles does not eliminate the mean differences. Dual wives' decrement in marital adjustment consistently remains significant in the high role commitment group. In one of these comparisons, however, the mean difference in marital adjustment is actually greater in absolute terms, though not

significant, in the low role commitment group. Dual wives' decrement in marital adjustment proves to be significant in the low satisfaction group in two out of three comparisons. Possible moderating effects are difficult to interpret here, because the patterns within each of these two second-order control analyses are somewhat less consistent than in the preceding analyses. Further complicating interpretation, the results of these two control analyses are not consistent with each other, that is, a significant difference between dual wives and housewives tends to remain when wives have high role commitment but also when they have low role satisfaction. A complete test was not possible of the hypothesis concerning husbands' attitudes toward wives' present roles, but the distributional pattern alone demonstrates that dual wives are no more or less likely than housewives to report that their husbands disapprove of their present roles.

Role load, an alternative causal explanation of the marital adjustment differences in the low education category, moderates rather than accounts for the effects of wives' employment on adjustment. Controlling for role load, that is, does not eliminate all mean differences. Rather, the differences between dual wives and housewives remain substantial and significant for the low but not the high load category. This moderating effect is a curious one: wives' employment would plausibly be expected to have a stronger negative effect on marital adjustment in the high than in the low role load category. Distributional tests are, however, consistent with the role load hypothesis for the items on wanting more husband help at home, since more dual wives than housewives

express a desire for additional husband help.

To recapitulate, the findings for the specific hypotheses tested among mothers of preschool children and wives with less than a high school diploma are broadly negative. In no instance do the major causal mechanisms, wives' role load, and wives' and husbands' attitudes toward wives' present roles, account for the decrement in the marital adjustment of dual wives. It is possible that better measures of secondary controls, especially wives' role load, would produce fewer negative results. It is also possible that only a radically different set of hypotheses would abolish the negative pattern. If so, datasets other than the present two will probably be needed.

The analyses do, however, uncover one plausible and relatively consistent moderating effect that emerges clearly for the relevant measures of load and adjustment in both datasets: Among mothers of preschool children, a significant relationship between wives' employment and adjustment exists primarily among those high in role load. Two other relatively consistent moderating effects occur, but these are counter-intuitive: Among mothers of preschool children, dual wives' significant decrement in marital adjustment appears primarily among those reporting positive scores on the attitudinal variables; and among wives with less than a high school diploma, the decrement occurs significantly only among those low in role load. Finally, the moderating effects of wives' role commitment and role satisfaction among less educated wives follow no consistent pattern. None of these counter-intuitive or inconsistent moderating effects, however, could be adequately tested in the two present datasets. Further research should

pursue these paradoxical moderating effects, and if they are successfully replicated, should investigate their dynamics.

## REFERENCE NOTES

1. Feldman, H. Development of the husband-wife relationship. (Research report to the National Institute of Mental Health.) Ithaca: Cornell University, Department of Human Development and Family Studies, 1965.

2. Fidell, L. Employment status, role dissatisfaction, and the housewife syndrome. Unpublished manuscript, 1977. (Available from Department of Psychology, California State University, Northridge, California 91324.)

3. Fidell, L. Personal communication, March 18, 1977.

4. Hauenstein, L. S. Attitudes of married women toward work and family (Reports 1 and 2). Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, Department of Psychology, 1976.

## REFERENCES

Axelson, L. J. The marital adjustment and marital role definitions of husbands of working and nonworking wives. Marriage and Family Living, 1963, 25, 189-195.

Babbie, E. R. Survey research methods. Belmont: Wadsworth Publishing, 1973.

Blood, R. O., Jr., & Wolfe, D. M. Husbands and wives. Glencoe, Ill.: Free Press, 1960.

Buric, O., & Zecevic, A. Family authority, marital satisfaction, and the social network in Yugoslavia. Journal of Marriage and the Family, 1967, 29, 325-336.

Burke, R. J., & Weir, T. Relationship of wives' employment status to husband, wife and pair satisfaction and performance. Journal of Marriage and the Family, 1976, 38, 279-287.

Campbell, A., Converse, P. E., & Rodgers, W. L. The Quality of American Life. Perceptions, evaluations, and satisfactions. New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1976.

Campbell, A. Women at home and at work. In McGuigan, D. (Ed.), New research on women and sex roles. Ann Arbor, Mich.: Center for Continuing Education of Women, 1976.

Davis, K. B. Factors in the sex life of twenty-two hundred women. New York: Harper, 1929.

Feld, S. Feelings of adjustment. In Nye, F. I., & Hoffman, L. W. (Eds.), The employed mother in America. Chicago: Rand McNally, 1963.

Fogarty, M. P., Rapoport, R., & Rapoport, R. N. Sex, career, and family. London: George Allen & Unwin, 1971.

Gover, D. Socio-economic differential in the relationship between marital adjustment and wife's employment status. Marriage and Family Living, 1963, 25, 452-458.

Haavio-Mannila, E. Satisfaction with family, work, leisure, and life among men and women. Human Relations, 1971, 24, 585-601.

Locke, H. J. & Mackeprang, M. Marital adjustment and the employed wife. American Journal of Sociology, 1949, 54, 536-538.

Michel, A. Comparative data concerning the interaction in French and American families. Journal of Marriage and the Family, 1967, 29, 337-344.

Nye, F. I. Employment status of mothers and marital conflict, permanence, and happiness. Social Problems, 1959, 6, 260-267.

Orden, S. R., & Bradburn, N. M. Working wives and marriage happiness. American Journal of Sociology, 1969, 74, 392-407.

Radloff, L. Sex differences in depression: The effects of occupation and marital status. Sex Roles, 1975, 1, 249-265.

Robinson, J. P., Yerby, J., Feiweger, M., & Somerick, N. Time use as an indicator of sex role territoriality. Sex Roles, in press.

Safilios-Rothschild, C. A comparison of power structure and marital satisfaction in urban Greek and French families. Journal of Marriage and the Family, 1967, 29, 345-352.

Safilios-Rothschild, C. The influence of the wife's degree of work commitment upon some aspects of family organization and dynamics. Journal of Marriage and the Family, 1970, 32, 681-691.

Scanzoni, J. H. Opportunity and the family. New York: Free Press, 1970.

Tavris, C. A. The unliberated liberals: Attitudes toward the issues of women's liberation (Doctoral dissertation, University of Michigan, 1971). Dissertation Abstracts International, 1972, 32, 6542A. (University Microfilms No. 72-15, 013).

Tavris, C. A. , & Jayaratne, T. How happy is your marriage? Redbook, June 1976, pp. 90-92; 132; 134.

## FOOTNOTES

This research was supported in part by Grant No. 91-26-75-28 from the Employment and Training Administration, U.S. Department of Labor. We would like to thank the editors of this journal issue and the following colleagues for their helpful criticisms of an earlier draft of the manuscript: Angus Campbell, Elizabeth Douvan, Jane Hood, Richard Kulka, and Joseph Veroff. In addition, we wish to acknowledge the generous assistance of Laura Klem in planning the statistical analyses. The order of authorship for the first two authors was determined randomly. Requests for reprints should be addressed to Graham L. Staines, Assistant Research Scientist, Survey Research Center, Institute for Social Research, Ann Arbor, MI 48106.

[1]This summary of the literature omits a number of studies that compared the marital adjustment of dual wives and housewives among mothers only (e.g., Feld, 1963; Nye, 1959).

[2]In the analyses reported here, all dual wives are grouped together. A preliminary analysis compared the marital adjustment of dual wives employed 35 or more hours per week (approximately 70% of all dual wives in the two surveys), dual wives employed 20-34 hours per week (18%), and dual wives employed 1-19 hours per week (12%). Although limited by the small sample sizes in the two part-time subgroups, these

analyses found no significant differences among the three subgroups of dual wives on any of the measures of marital adjustment.

[3]The present results on wives' employment status and marital adjustment in the Quality of Life Survey differ from those reported by Campbell et al. (1976). In comparing employed wives and housewives, Campbell et al. concluded, "So far as our data can carry us, we find little reason to believe that on the average employment outside the home either enhances or diminishes a marriage, at least as the wives see it" (p. 425).

Campbell et al. contrasted employed wives and housewives by comparing the percentages in each group with responses indicating positive adjustment on the seven dependent measures available in their survey. On the two dependent measures revealing a significant mean difference between dual wives and housewives in the present analysis, Campbell et al. noted that 63% of employed wives and 74% of housewives said that they had never wished they had married someone else, and that 59% of employed wives and 68% of housewives indicated that the thought of divorce had never crossed their minds. Campbell et al. did not report significance tests for these differences, and chose to deemphasize them in their interpretation. In addition to using a different summary statistic for comparing the two groups (percentages instead of means), Campbell et al.'s analysis also differed from the present one in that it included those wives whose husbands were not currently employed. As a result, sample sizes for Campbell et al.'s analysis (p. 423) were somewhat larger than

those in the present analysis (445 versus 368 housewives, and 291 employed wives versus 259 dual wives). These differences in group definition and statistical procedure both contribute to the discrepancies between the results from the two analyses.

[4]As in the zero-order analyses, the results of these first-order analyses on education differ from those reported by Campbell et al. (1976; also Campbell, 1976). Campbell et al. presented data concerning only college graduates, again comparing employed wives and housewives using percentage rather than mean differences. They concluded that ". . . it is the highly educated housewife who does not have an outside job whose marriage seems most likely to be beset by disagreements, lack of understanding and companionship, doubts and dissatisfactions" (p. 427). Yet they expressed puzzlement that responses on the item which mentioned thinking about a divorce did not conform to this pattern favoring educated employed wives. As was true of the zero-order comparisons (footnote 3), Campbell et al. did not report significance tests for individual items. Nevertheless, they commented more generally that "it is unlikely that these differences are entirely a matter of chance" (p. 427). The differences between the present results on wives with a college degree and those of Campbell et al. appear to derive from the differences in statistical procedure and group definition noted in Footnote 3. One item in particular illustrates how different statistics can lead to different results. On the question about wishing to have married someone else, the responses of college graduate employed wives tended to fall in the extreme categories at the ends of the scale. Hence, among wives with a college degree, those employed reported more frequently

than housewives that they had "never" wished they had married someone else (Campbell et al.'s result); yet, simultaneously, they exhibited a higher _average_ frequency of wishing they had married someone else (the present result in Table 3).

[5]Not shown here are the results divided by occupational prestige of husband's job, an alternative to respondent's education as a socio-economic index. The results for these two alternative controls are broadly similar, that is, significant differences favoring housewives over dual wives among lower socioeconomic segments of the samples for three measures only (_marital satisfaction_, _wish married other_, and _think of divorce_). Yet the comparisons by levels of education address previous findings in the literature more directly and prove more amenable to testing certain theoretical interpretations of the significant differences obtained.

[6]Although not critical to the argument here, it remains interesting to ask whether a control on husbands' attitudes to their wives' present roles (not shown in Table 6) uncovers any significant differences in marital happiness between dual wives and housewives that are not present among all wives with less than a high school diploma. According to the relevant *t* tests, the answer is negative.

[7]Less educated dual wives and housewives may nonetheless be compared on marital happiness within levels of the control on wanting more husband help (cf. Footnote 6). Again, the *t* tests reveal no significant differences at this second-order level.

Table 1

Mean Scores on Global and Specific Measures of Marital Adjustment for Wives and Husbands, by Wives' Employment Status[a]

| Global Measures | Dual Wives | House-wives | Difference (DW-HW) | t | Dual Husbands | Sole Bread-winners | Difference (DH-SB) | t |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Quality of Life Survey 1971 | | | | | | | |
| Marital satisfaction | 6.06 (259) | 6.23 (364) | -.17 | -1.76 | 6.30 (201) | 6.36 (303) | -.06 | -.68 |
| Wish married another | 4.31 (259) | 4.58 (364) | -.27 | -3.65** | 4.55 (201) | 4.54 (302) | .01 | .12 |
| Think of divorce | 4.30 (259) | 4.48 (364) | -.18 | -2.51* | 4.56 (201) | 4.55 (302) | .01 | .21 |
| | Omnibus Survey 1973 | | | | | | | |
| Marital happiness | 2.86 (194) | 2.91 (232) | -.05 | -.66 | 2.93[b] (351) | | | |

Table 1--(continued)

| Specific Measures | Dual Wives | House-wives | Difference (DW-HW) | t | Dual Husbands | Sole Bread-winners | Difference (DH-SB) | t |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Quality of Life Survey 1971 | | | | | | | |
| Financial disagreements | 3.65 (259) | 3.60 (368) | .05 | .66 | 3.64 (203) | 3.65 (303) | -.01 | -.05 |
| Understood by spouse | 3.29 (259) | 3.26 (366) | .03 | .41 | 3.40 (203) | 3.41 (303) | -.01 | -.09 |
| Understand spouse | 3.36 (259) | 3.42 (367) | -.06 | -.98 | 3.34 (202) | 3.33 (303) | .01 | .25 |
| Companionship | 3.84 (258) | 3.87 (367) | -.03 | -.30 | 3.81 (203) | 3.75 (301) | .06 | .61 |

Note: In this and all subsequent tables, scoring has been reversed on items where necessary so that high score means good adjustment.

[a]In this and all subsequent tables, minor variations across variables in the sample size of any one group or subgroup may be attributed to missing data cases.

[b]In the Omnibus Survey, dual husbands and sole breadwinner husbands could not be distinguished.

*$p < .05$.

Table 2

Mean Scores on Global Measures of Marital Adjustment for Wives, by Wives' Employment Status and Family Life Cycle Stage

| Family Life Cycle Stage | Dual Wives | House-wives | Difference (DW-HW) | t |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Marital satisfaction (Quality of Life)** | | | | |
| Under 30 without children | 6.37 (32) | 6.27 (11) | .10 | .34 |
| Preschool children | 5.83 (53) | 6.18 (156) | -.35 | -1.74 |
| School age children | 5.99 (101) | 6.18 (107) | -.19 | -1.09 |
| 30+ without children | 6.18 (71) | 6.37 (86) | -.19 | -1.00 |
| **Wish married another (Quality of Life)** | | | | |
| Under 30 without children | 4.47 (32) | 4.46 (11) | .01 | .04 |
| Preschool children | 3.87 (53) | 4.48 (156) | -.61 | -4.10** |
| School age children | 4.35 (101) | 4.63 (107) | -.28 | -2.17* |
| 30+ without children | 4.51 (71) | 4.73 (86) | -.22 | -1.76 |

Table 2--(continued)

| Family Life Cycle Stage | Dual Wives | House-wives | Difference (DW-HW) | t |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Think of divorce (Quality of Life)** | | | | |
| Under 30 without children | 4.63 (32) | 4.36 (11) | .27 | 1.02 |
| Preschool children | 3.87 (53) | 4.40 (156) | -.53 | -3.48** |
| School age children | 4.26 (101) | 4.58 (107) | -.32 | -2.55* |
| 30+ without children | 4.52 (71) | 4.55 (86) | -.03 | -.19 |
| **Marital happiness (Omnibus)** | | | | |
| Under 30 without children | 3.22 (23) | 3.42 (12) | -.20 | -.60 |
| Preschool children | 2.72 (46) | 3.07 (84) | -.35 | -2.37* |
| School age children | 2.82 (83) | 2.67 (69) | .15 | 1.15 |
| 30+ without children | 2.85 (40) | 2.87 (67) | -.02 | -.10 |

*$p < .05$.

**$p < .01$.

Table 3

Mean Scores on Global Measures of Marital Adjustment for Wives, by Wives' Employment Status and Education

| Level of Education | Dual Wives | House-wives | Difference (DW-HW) | t |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Marital satisfaction (Quality of Life)** | | | | |
| Less than high school diploma | 5.80 (61) | 6.30 (121) | -.50 | -2.34* |
| High school diploma | 6.16 (125) | 6.26 (171) | -.10 | -.72 |
| Some college | 6.00 (42) | 6.06 (46) | -.06 | -.25 |
| College degree+ | 6.28 (29) | 5.91 (22) | .37 | 1.35 |
| **Wish married another (Quality of Life)** | | | | |
| Less than high school diploma | 4.25 (61) | 4.70 (121) | -.45 | -3.14** |
| High school diploma | 4.36 (125) | 4.55 (171) | -.19 | -1.86 |
| Some college | 4.14 (42) | 4.30 (46) | -.16 | -.72 |
| College degree+ | 4.48 (29) | 4.64 (22) | -.16 | -.63 |

Table 3--(continued)

| Level of Education | Dual Wives | House-wives | Difference (DW-HW) | t |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Think of divorce (Quality of Life)** | | | | |
| Less than high school diploma | 4.08 (61) | 4.55 (121) | -.47 | -3.24** |
| High school diploma | 4.40 (125) | 4.51 (171) | -.11 | -1.07 |
| Some college | 4.31 (42) | 4.17 (46) | .14 | .58 |
| College degree+ | 4.31 (29) | 4.46 (22) | -.15 | -.68 |
| **Marital happiness (Omnibus)** | | | | |
| Less than high school diploma | 2.60 (52) | 2.81 (79) | -.21 | -1.43 |
| High school diploma | 2.91 (91) | 2.94 (111) | -.03 | -.21 |
| Some college | 2.96 (26) | 3.03 (32) | -.07 | -.30 |
| College degree+ | 3.08 (25) | 3.00 (10) | .08 | .28 |

*$p < .05$.

**$p < .01$.

Table 4

Mean Scores on Global Measures of Marital Adjustment for Mothers of Preschool Children, by Wives' Employment Status and Wives' Role Load

| Control Variable | Dual Wives | House-wives | Difference (DW-HW) | t |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Marital happiness (Omnibus)** | | | | |
| Want more help from husbands | | | | |
| Yes | 2.31[a] (26) | 2.97 (37) | -.66 | -3.19** |
| No | 3.26 (19) | 3.15 (46) | .11 | .56 |
| **Wish married another (Quality of Life)** | | | | |
| Feel rushed | | | | |
| Always | 3.50[a] (20) | 4.37 (38) | -.87 | -3.09** |
| Sometimes or Almost Never | 4.09 (33) | 4.52 (118) | -.43 | -2.41* |
| **Think of divorce (Quality of Life)** | | | | |
| Feel rushed | | | | |
| Always | 3.40[a] (20) | 4.21 (38) | -.81 | -2.72** |
| Sometimes or Almost Never | 4.15 (33) | 4.46 (118) | -.31 | -1.77 |

[a]The difference between high and low role load groups within dual wives is significant for each of these three comparisons: $t(43)=4.13$, $p < 0.01$; $t(51)=2.07$, $p < 0.05$; $t(51)=2.65$, $p < 0.05$.

*$p < .05$.
**$p < .01$.

Table 5

Mean Scores on Global Measures of Marital Adjustment
for Mothers of Preschool Children,
by Wives' Employment Status and Attitudes to Wives' Current Roles

| Control Variables | Dual Wives | House-wives | Difference (DW-HW) | t |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Wish married another (Quality of Life)** | | | | |
| Wives' Role Commitment | | | | |
| High | 3.83 (30) | 4.53 (122) | -.70 | -3.93** |
| Low | 3.91 (23) | 4.37 (30) | -.46 | -1.58 |
| **Think of divorce (Quality of Life)** | | | | |
| Wives' Role Commitment | | | | |
| High | 3.97 (30) | 4.43 (122) | -.46 | -2.49* |
| Low | 3.74 (23) | 4.43 (30) | -.69 | -2.44* |
| **Wish married another (Quality of Life)** | | | | |
| Wives' Role Satisfaction | | | | |
| High | 3.86 (29) | 4.60 (111) | -.74 | -4.00** |
| Low | 3.88 (24) | 4.18 (44) | -.30 | -1.16 |

Table 5--(continued)

| Control Variables | Dual Wives | House-wives | Difference (DW-HW) | t |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Think of divorce (Quality of Life)** | | | | |
| Wives' Role Satisfaction | | | | |
| High | 3.79 (29) | 4.51 (111) | -.72 | -3.93** |
| Low | 3.96 (24) | 4.11 (44) | -.15 | -.57 |
| **Marital happiness (Omnibus)** | | | | |
| Husbands' Attitudes to Wives' Present Roles[a] | | | | |
| Approving | 2.55 (20) | 3.07 (45) | -.52 | -2.31* |
| Neutral | 2.67 (6) | 3.25 (16) | -.58 | -1.70 |
| Disapproving | 2.83 (6) | 2.91 (21) | -.08 | -.19 |

[a]Dual wives with preschool children and employed fewer than 20 hours per week were excluded from this control analysis, since the item on which this variable was based specified husband's attitude toward the respondent's being employed at least half-time.

*$p < .05$.

**$p < .01$.

Table 6

Mean Scores on Global Measures of Marital Adjustment
for Wives with Less Than a High School Diploma,
by Wives' Employment Status and Attitudes to Wives' Current Roles
(Quality of Life Survey)

| Control Variables | Dual Wives | House-wives | Difference (DW-HW) | t |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Marital satisfaction** | | | | |
| Wives' Role Commitment | | | | |
| High | 5.83 (29) | 6.37 (98) | -.54 | -1.99* |
| Low | 5.84 (31) | 6.14 (21) | -.30 | -.73 |
| **Wish married another** | | | | |
| Wives' Role Commitment | | | | |
| High | 4.24 (29) | 4.71 (98) | -.47 | -2.54* |
| Low | 4.23 (31) | 4.62 (21) | -.39 | -1.31 |
| **Think of divorce** | | | | |
| Wives' Role Commitment | | | | |
| High | 4.14 (29) | 4.54 (98) | -.40 | -2.20* |
| Low | 4.10 (31) | 4.67 (21) | -.57 | -1.92 |

Table 6--(continued)

| Control Variables | Dual Wives | House-wives | Difference (DW-HW) | t |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Marital satisfaction** | | | | |
| Wives' Role Satisfaction | | | | |
| High | 6.11 (26) | 6.45 (67) | -.34 | -1.07 |
| Low | 5.57 (35) | 6.13 (53) | -.56 | -1.93 |
| **Wish married another** | | | | |
| Wives' Role Satisfaction | | | | |
| High | 4.50 (26) | 4.78 (67) | -.28 | -1.36 |
| Low | 4.06 (35) | 4.60 (53) | -.54 | -2.59* |
| **Think of divorce** | | | | |
| Wives' Role Satisfaction | | | | |
| High | 4.19 (26) | 4.58 (67) | -.39 | -1.84 |
| Low | 4.00 (35) | 4.53 (53) | -.53 | -2.56* |

*$p < .05$.

Table 7

Mean Scores on Global Measures of Marital Adjustment for Wives with Less Than a High School Diploma, by Wives' Employment Status and Wives' Role Load (Quality of Life)

| Control Variable | Dual Wives | House-wives | Difference (DW-HW) | t |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Marital satisfaction** | | | | |
| Feel Rushed | | | | |
| Always | 5.41 (17) | 5.26 (23) | .15 | .27 |
| Sometimes or Almost Never | 5.96 (44) | 6.54 (98) | -.58 | -2.91** |
| **Wish married another** | | | | |
| Feel Rushed | | | | |
| Always | 4.41 (17) | 4.57 (23) | -.16 | -.43 |
| Sometimes or Almost Never | 4.18 (44) | 4.74 (98) | -.56 | -3.51** |
| **Think of divorce** | | | | |
| Feel Rushed | | | | |
| Always | 3.88 (17) | 4.09 (23) | -.21 | -.56 |
| Sometimes or Almost Never | 4.16 (44) | 4.66 (98) | -.50 | -3.33** |

*$p < .01$.